## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

For a more complete understanding of the present invention, reference is now made to the following descriptions taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing, in which:

Fig. 1 shows an exemplary implementation of a prior art network management system;

Fig. 2 shows a relatively simple example of a state-based approach to polling;

Figs. 3A-3B show an example of a specific state model that may be defined in a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 4A-4B show another example of a specific state model that may be defined in a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 5 shows an exemplary management system of a preferred embodiment implemented with distributed polling gateways;

Fig. 6 shows an exemplary flow diagram for the process of defining a state model according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 7A-7C show a plurality of exemplary state models that may be cross-correlated according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 8 shows an exemplary flow diagram of the operation of a gateway in performing state-based polling according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 9A-9E show exemplary user interfaces that may presented to a user for defining and modifying polling services and state models according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 10 shows an example of utilizing the state-based modeling system of a preferred embodiment to configure a network element;

Fig. 11A shows an example of a user interface that may be implemented in a preferred embodiment to enable a user to define a cross-correlation of state models; and